GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
LAW AND JUSTICE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1826
ANSWERED ON:26.07.2017
National Legal Services Authority
Fatepara Shri Devajibhai Govindbhai

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Legal Services Authority is planning to provide free legal assistance to poorest of poor languishing in district jails for years;
(b) if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether legal services establishment counters have been set up in various States and Union Territories for the said purpose; and
(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR LAW AND JUSTICE AND ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI P.P.CHAUDHARY)

(a) & (b) The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been providing free legal assistance to poor, marginalized persons including persons who are in custody since last two decades. Under Trial Review Committees (UTRCs) have been formed at district levels as mandated by the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide its order dated 06.05.2016 in WP(C) No.406/2016 to monitor the timely identification and release of under-trials. The UTRC comprises the District Judge, the District Magistrate, the Superintendent of Police and the member Secretary, District legal Services Authority (DLSA). A number of convicts and under-trials have been released in pursuance of the recommendations of the UTRCs since the judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. The Minister of Law & Justice had also written to the Chief Justices of all High Courts on 03.02.2017 to advise the district judiciary to review all cases under Section 436 A CrPC, and take suo moto action for the release of the under trials.
(c) & (d) The State Legal Services Authorities (SLSAs) have established legal services clinics in all jails to provide free legal aid to the inmates. These clinics are manned by panel lawyers and para legal volunteers (PLVs). Legal Services Authorities ha ve presence in all districts and over 6200 talukas in the country. In addition, NALSA has set up Legal Assistance Establishments (LAEs) in a number of State capitals where under-trial prisoners/convicts can interact with the panel lawyers for legal advice/legal aid and also to know the status of their pending cases.